



MEMORANDUM

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CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD CENTRAL VALLEY REGION

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Pete Wilson, Governor

TO: Judy Heath
CALFED

FROM: Val Connor

DATE: 12 May 1998

SIGNATURE: Val Connor

SUBJECT: *Sacramento River Watershed Program input for CALFED'S Watershed Management Strategy*

The following is a written summary of comments presented by Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) participants at the two public workshops on the Draft CALFED Watershed Management Strategy.

Background on the Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP): Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District initiated a grant-funded project, the Sacramento River Toxic Pollutant Control Program (SRTPCP). The SRTPCP provided funding to initiate and develop a broader watershed-wide program to deal with all water quality issues, not just toxicants. The first stakeholder meeting was in March, 1996. The SRWP uses a stewardship-based and interest-based consensus approach to make decisions

The stakeholder group adopted the following mission statement:

To ensure that current and potential uses of the watershed's resources are sustained, restored, and where possible, enhanced, while promoting the long term social and economic vitality of the region.

Currently, the SRWP has a mailing list of 800 participants. About 200 participants actively attend stakeholder and subcommittee meetings. There are five subcommittees focusing on monitoring, toxic pollutants, biological assessment, public outreach and education and a committee to focus on the specific workplan elements associated with the SRTPCP grants. Stakeholder meetings and education workshops have been held in Sacramento, Chico and Red Bluff to enable participation by stakeholders throughout the watershed. SRWP participants have designed a water quality monitoring program which will start later this spring.

Comments on CALFED's Watershed Management Strategy: No single individual can speak for the participants of the SRWP. However, these comments were generated by two subcommittees (Toxics and Public Outreach and Education) and are consistent with the philosophy commonly voiced at our stakeholder meetings.

CALFED's proposed watershed management strategy:

- should be based on a bottom-up (grass roots) approach instead of a top-down approach.



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Our mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.

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- appears to have potential benefits for local groups but must avoid dominating them with state and federal decisions.
- should make understanding of, and communication with, local groups its primary approach. This would include continuing attendance by state/federal/regional agency staff at local meetings, not attendance of local groups at CALFED meetings.
- should support successful existing watershed programs with funding and resources without changing the programs themselves.
- should encourage local stakeholders (with funding and resources) to initiate watershed programs where no programs now exist.
- should provide funding information on sources of funds other than CALFED to local groups as one resource service. This information should especially be given to groups that unsuccessfully apply to CALFED funding.
- should fund monitoring programs of all kinds, including water quality.
- should focus on resolving federal issues necessary to implement water quality management programs, e.g., good Samaritan legislation allowing clean-up of abandoned mines.
- should be a supporting resource and networking information hub, not a regulator.
- the form of the CALFED watershed oversight authority must be carefully chosen, with greater weight given to the desires of local watershed groups than to those state/federal agencies.
- should help all interests in the watershed with the challenges faced by all of us--information exchange and sustaining stewardship programs.
- could help facilitate the discussions necessary to solve existing water quality issues. For example the potential conflicts between landowner rights and the public trust, and the challenges associated with encouraging local watershed assessments in light of the fear of potential repercussions (i.e. regulations).